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14. OCCURRENCE AND ASSOCIATION OF RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *PHALAROPUS LOBATUS* WITH OTHER SPECIES AT SAMBHAR, RAJASTHAN

With its slim graceful body, slender neck, small head, needle-like bill and lobed toes, the red-necked phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* is one of the most distinctive waders. It is an expert swimmer, readily distinguished from other waders by its ability to land on water.

Adam (1874) obtained specimens of this rare bird on September 22 and 25 at Sambhar. According to Ali and Ripley (1980), it has been "recorded from few inland localities on spring and/or autumn passage". Roberts (1991) says they "take flight to the sea coast non-stop, but occasional birds can be encountered on inland lakes or freshwater ponds on passage" and describes the status as "common but only offshore".

The purpose of this note is to report recent sightings of the red-necked phalarope at Sambhar lake and describe its foraging method in association with other feeding birds on passage. Twenty-seven red-necked phalarope were recorded at Kochia ki Dhani, a satellite freshwater wetland of Sambhar Lake on September 9, 1998. Eleven of them were swimming with six little grebe *Podiceps ruficollis* and picking up insects from the surface of the water. The other birds were paddling and spinning to bring prey to the surface.

In the afternoon of February 5, 1999, Denis Parkes, a British bird watcher, and I were watching waders at Kochia ki Dhani, Sambhar. Scanning the birds with my binoculars, I picked out a more lightly built bird and said that I had the red-necked phalarope. We counted 17 red-necked phalaropes on this freshwater pond. All

of them were in 'off' plumage. They were staying in two to three groups around shovellers *Anas clypeata*. They were spinning around picking off flies disturbed by the ducks as they swam. As is customary with the genus when on inland waters, the group was not wary of us.

On September 5, 1999, Harsh Vardhan and I recorded four red-necked phalarope at the same site with seven or eight avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta*, presumably taking advantage of the prey or edible particles brought to the surface, or into view, by foraging avocets in a shallow part of the lake. All the phalaropes were actively following the avocets.

The explanation for this behaviour is that the red-necked phalarope "associate with the other feeding birds probably to benefit from the higher prey availability brought about by disturbance" (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). According to Cramp and Simmons (1983), the red-necked phalarope feed in this manner "presumably to take advantage of prey brought to surface or into view". Two comprehensive books on the birds of the Subcontinent (Ali and Ripley 1980, and Roberts 1991) describe its feeding methods, but do not record its feeding association with other birds. This note provides additional information on the feeding behaviour of the species in the Indian Subcontinent.

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15. POMPADOUR GREEN PIGEON *TRERON POMPADORA AFFINIS*
AND LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO *HIEROCOCCYX SPARVERIOIDES*
ON THE PALKONDA HILLS, PENINSULAR INDIA

We visited Talakona Reserve Forest (13° 49' N, 79° 13' E) along with members of the Bird Ringing Training Programme, organized by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), from August 27-29, 1999, led by the second author. We camped at the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department's Guest House Complex at the Siddeswaraswamy Temple. Talakona is c. 70 km northwest of Tirupati town in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh, and situated past Bhakarapeta near Nerabylu village in the foothills of the Palkondas, in what are collectively known as the Eastern Ghats. The hills that lie between Nerabylu and Mogilipenta, which is on the northeastern side, have several peaks higher than 1,000 m in this part of the Palkonda Range. Talakona is in the midst of a sacred grove, some 5 sq. km in area, with Semi-Evergreen jungle, including several endemic tree species (Anon. 1996: 14, 20, but specified location of Talakona on page 20 is incorrect). We bird-watched along a narrow 3 km stretch of riparian forest on either side of a perennial stream, Bugga Vagu. This is a frequently used pilgrim route that proceeds eastward from the temple and leads to the Talakona, or Papanasanam waterfall. One walks almost parallel to the stream most of the way, on a path at least 20-25 m above the water level, and affords excellent views into the canopy of the trees that rise from the valley below.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo

Hierococcyx sparverioides Vigors

While we were returning from the waterfall on the morning of August 28, 1999, a hawk-like bird flew on to a bare branch of a tall tree (c. 30 m), at eye level. In flight, we suspected it was a brainfever bird *Hierococcyx varius* Vahl. But through the binoculars it turned out to be a large hawk-cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparverioides* Vigors! It looked slightly bigger than *H. varius*, and a yellow circle was clearly visible around its orangish eye. It had very prominent dark grey horizontal bars on its white belly and its tail was distinctly banded dirty brown and dark grey. This will be the second published record of *H. sparverioides* from what are known as the Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh State. The first was by Ripley *et al.* (1988: 553), who recorded two immature females collected by them at Jyothimamidi "in disturbed forest" on the "Vizag Ghats" (that lie in the Northern Circars section of Andhra Pradesh, north of the Godavari river) on February 23 and 25, 1985 (see also Taher and Pittie, 1989: 14). However, if the biogeographical sub-areas of Ghorpadé (*in litt.* 22-ix-1999 and map, 1999: 4) are scientifically more correct, the 'true' Eastern Ghats occur only south of the Godavari and east of the Western Ghats: the "Vizag Hills" and others north of the Godavari being 'incompatible' with them, and belonging to what Ghorpadé terms the Central Highlands